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June 24, 2005

Ms. Diane Eidam
Executive Director
California Transportation Commission
1120 N Street, Room 2221 (MS-52)
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Draft 2006 STIP Guidelines, Performance Measures

Dear Ms. Eidam:

Thank you for the opportunity provided by the workshop on June 16 to comment on the use of performance measures in conjunction with the 2006 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) submittal. MTC appreciates the importance of measuring the performance of transportation plans and programs. To this end, I am writing to express support for the approach that evolved over the course of the discussion at the workshop. In particular, MTC endorses the following concepts expressed on June 16:

1. Each region would submit a summary of how system performance is assessed in its regional transportation plan (RTP) and how performance of the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) flows from that assessment. The RTP, where regions engage in goal setting and strategic planning, provides the most appropriate forum for measuring performance of our investment programs. Importantly, the RTP also establishes our strategy for balancing complementary funding sources -- including the STIP, other state, federal and local funds -- to achieve regional transportation goals. It is difficult to look meaningfully at the impacts of any single funding source in isolation from the others, especially given the volatile funding climate during the past several years.

The summary would address RTP goals, performance measures and methodologies. It also would address data gaps and methodological concerns associated with the performance measures proposed by Caltrans. Improved data on state highway system performance is especially critical to our ability to gauge system performance, and we urge Caltrans to expedite their work in this area.

2. Regions with major, new RTIP projects would select sample projects for which to submit project-level performance analysis, based on existing data. This data may come from project study reports, environmental documents, corridor or RTP analyses. Comparable information would be assembled by Caltrans for projects proposed for the Interregional Transportation Improvement Program (ITIP). This assessment also would highlight areas where gaps and inconsistencies exist in project level performance data exist and where Caltrans and local agencies should work to improve data collection and analysis.

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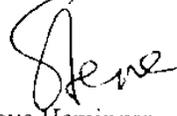
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3. To facilitate application of consistent project-level performance measurement in the future, it may be appropriate to establish specific performance measures and methodologies for use in project study reports or other project initiation documents, where detailed project-level analysis is already undertaken. This data could later be forwarded along with STIP submittals to provide an indication of the expected impacts of projects. It also would be possible to aggregate these data for a rough measure of the aggregate impact of a given STIP.

Together these efforts will result in what is essentially a "prototype" performance analysis of the STIP. The approach will allow the CTC to move forward expeditiously with performance measurement while permitting the regions to focus their energies over the next several months on developing the RTIP programs. It further allows Caltrans and the regions to build solid baseline data on existing conditions and to continue the ongoing, collaborative effort to identify and put specific performance measures to the test. As a result, Caltrans and the regions will be able to invest most wisely the substantial necessary resources to do the job right.

Very truly yours,



Steve Heminger
Executive Director

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cc: Commissioner James Ghillmetti
Commissioner Jeremiah Hallisey
John Barna, Business, Transportation and Housing Agency
Brian Smith, Caltrans
Debbie Mah, Caltrans